



## TSONGWE

Region: North Katanga Eastern Kasai

SONGWE-010-020-030-040-050

The primordial twins: this monozygotic character has within him all the secret practices, and sacred of incest. "Janus", the most important of the beginning of the Beneki reign. A native wrought iron of +/- 7 cm square and regularly fed by the funnel (horn), which multiplies the protective energies, the purity of the blood and all the other creative fertilizing forces, revered by all.

Beyond the ethnic borders in Tetela territory to the northwest, is the Kusu, Binja, Luba and even the Watambulu. All were aware of these important statues. In the south with the Kanoyk and the Kalundwe, it was the same thing. Ngoy and Mukonkole, the most famous androgynous characters of the Songue reign.

Height: 1.5 m

SONGWE-080-090-100-110

Region: KANANGA-KABINDA

Ethnic groups: NSAPO- BASANGA - BATEMBA - BELANDE - BENIKI - TEMPA DU SUD - PANIA  
MUTOMBO

The solar-headed N'Kishi, accompanied by his assistant advisers, the bird men (Katatora), is cunning and patient. Here in overload. He waits for the right moment to act. Warrior hunter, he protects the whole community. The word perfidy, often used by Westerners, is a serious error in judgment. Much appreciated by the Bushong elite of the Kuba kingdom who had a large number of them. His protective and avenging side was recognized by all.

The Shilele had similar statues, as did the Basanga.

Height: 1.25 m

## SONGWE - 2

SONGWE-010-020-030-040-050-060-070-080-090

Region: North of Urua. Ethnic boundary Waguenia-wana tussago.

Ethnicity: Luba

Sub-ethnic group: M'buli-barua

History:

M'boko-kabila ka vidye.

Woman called "The beggar".

Under the pressure of the missionary fathers, confiscating, burning or throwing into the river any idolatrous representation of the Africans, the latter coaxed the various churches by changing the position of these very important characters of worship. By now making them on their knees, a pottery leaning on the front of the thighs. Originally, they were all seated on the hindquarters, the drum, the calabash or the large raku jar placed on the shins, their legs stretched out on the ground, their hands joined to the object. The symbolism of each character was characterized by a very personal and different position each time. The head and even the body turned substantially towards the lunar side (the left). Significant scarifications represented only on the back, sometimes a cavity with protective ingredients at the level of the kidneys and exceptionally some lines in front of the ears on the temples. The very straight back meant dignity, righteousness. The body leaning forward, the woman was powerful, quick in all her executions. Eyes wide open represented clairvoyance, the gift of double sight. Eyes half closed in an attitude of reflection demonstrated to think before acting. The swelling of the eyelids was evidence of consumption of the sulugu plant.

Wife of a king or an elite man, she was buried alive in this position next to her deceased husband on a voluntary basis. The pain of grief was more powerful than the fear of being buried and suffocated by the land that was a deliverance for her. Reincarnation at that time brought the certainty of returning among the living and their eternal trials. The various receptacles were filled with food for the journey in order to peacefully reach the world above or that below.

The master of "bouli" or that of the "three rivers" is a Western interpretation which still has a hard time. It is based on what the natives wanted to tell because the Church and the colonial state, considering these beliefs as impious, wanted to ban them completely.

The blacks had quickly gone underground. By turning to the secret societies that have multiplied to hide and preserve entirely the tradition and their millenary knowledge by the guardians in osmosis with the natural elements.

Anonymous workshops of sculptors completely sheltered from the curiosity of the white man, these places hidden from all, were located in a very wide triangle: Along the Lukuga river, further north towards the Lufukuta and along the Luapula which joined the Kamolodo (the Lualaba).

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M'Buli, a very small village, was enclosed to the North by Mukatende, to the South by Makae-Laba and in the East by Kasolo where work sculptors of drums, masks, statues, prestige sticks, spear handles and knives were hiding.

Witch doctors, blacksmiths, soothsayers, etc. were invisible at the time. They never came out.

The sculptor of "Bouli" of which the museum of Tervuren speaks was at that time, for the majority of the natives, contaminated by his innovation, as in Europe in the 18th century where the Louis XV style disappeared radically supplanted by the Louis XVI style.

Kneeling women were rejected by the anticolonial generation.

Each character made in very hard wood like the crossopteryx weighs between 6 and 7 kilos. The kneeling woman, made from coconut or palm wood, weighs less than a kilo.

Today Lamboko has changed in usage. She must attract to her among the future initiates the one who will have the ability to become a soothsayer. His essential quest being to find the shining stone in the sacred wood. This first objective achieved will calm, with the immense power of seduction of the priestess.

The character holds the gourd with full hand, it signifies the endless waiting in the suffering of her sick husband whom she is ready to follow faithfully.

Seat height: 50 cm.

Kneeling: 40 cm.

Closed gourd: 25 cm.

The pendant: 11 cm.

return

SONGWE-060-070

Region: Kabinda

Ethnicity: Been'Ekiye

History:

M'zee, the old one, the one who knows, the one we listen to. His undisputable experience and constant contact with the world above and the world below make him an earthly messenger of primary importance. The sagittal crest covers the entire fontanelles to protect them from negative

## SONGWE - 4

influences. Substitute for Efile Mukulu, the god of the Basongwe. Presented in the common box, we lie flat on our stomachs on the ground, arms stretched forward, as a sign of deep respect and obedience at the foot of the man we call N'Doshi the Great. It is never worn, it is respectfully seized with both hands by the oldest guardian of the tradition or by an epileptic or postmenopausal priestess.

Height: 69 cm.

return

## SONGWE-120-130

Region: South East of Kongolo

Ethnicity: Songue

Sub-ethnic group: Bena-Paye

History:

This feminine (lunar) face is the Kikashi spirit. The mouth, a meeting point, is also the entrance and exit of the hive. This object is worn by a menopausal priestess during initiation rites of the fertility of the fields.

Height: 45 cm.

## SONGWE-130

Among the Basongue, the types of wood used are different for masks and for statues. They depend on the use of the object and on the sacred or playful representation. Yellow mahogany, ficus (40 m), mangrove, crossopteryx, false cotton. Very often for masks, it is ricinodendron africanum. For woods that cannot break: handles of axes, spears, adze is also used, musasa muri and limbali.

## SONGWE-140-151-150

The one we hear the voice of, delivering the teaching of the ancients beyond the tallest trees in the forest, as through all the great spaces of the wooded savannah, is only used during the periods of the rainy season.

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SONGWE - 5

SONGWE-160

Region: Sentery

Ethnicity: Songue-Beneki

Sub-ethnic group:

History:

This feminine face has vertical lines on the forehead which are supported by the eyebrows, in the very abstract form of the gushing fountain (fertility). Two sons of the cosmic spider support the square mouth (the house) at the level of the temples. The cross (living space) on the mouth spreads out at the four cardinal points (the crossroads). This mark also represents respect for the secrecy of the education received. The unfolded feather that completely covers the chin of this female lunar crocodile has to do with plants along the banks, which are used to braid certain sacred objects.

Height: 40 cm.

return

SONGWE-170

Region: Kongolo-kabalo

Ethnicity: Songue-Beneki

History:

The classic solar Kifwebe. The high ridge is always masculine. Here the object is stripped naked, so it was kept asleep in the sacred house.

Height: 50 cm.

return

SONGWE-180-190

Region: Kasongo-Mulongo-Malembe N'Kulu-Manono

Ethnicity: Kusu-Songue

Sub-ethnic group: Songue-Luba

History:

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## SONGWE - 6

This character is here with all his "charges" in full. Hollow base to be placed on a pillar in the centre of the box during deliberations. He is an incorruptible witness before whom lying is prohibited. He has a lion's claw on the fontanelles.

Height: 63 cm.

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### SONGWE-200-210

Region: East Lomami - North-South border of Luba territory

Feminine lunar, the quarter of the moon on the generally open mouth is absent here. The pod of the baobab fruit are the lips that tighten the tongue, imposing silence on initiates who have already completed several routes.

### SONGWE-220-428-429

Region: Kogonlo-Kabalo

Ethnicity: Songue-Bena Bayashi

Sub-ethnic group: Benapay group in the far south near Luba Hamba.

History:

N'Kongolo buried in Lomami in a sacred wood near Mwadi.

He created the first Luba kingdom. He was of distant Kuyambula-Beneki origin, who came from the Azande-Mangbetu country along the borders of Kuba territory.

Very friendly contacts with the elites of this Bushong kingdom. In permanent war against Arab slavers and some of their Azande-Mangbetu allies.

The notable Tshites and those of Nyimi descendants of the same Bambala group were very friendly before the arrival of the Westerners.

The powerful and very secret Bukishi brotherhood was linked to the Bwadi Ka Kifwebe. Inside there was another formidable parallel power, the Masende. He dealt exclusively with criminals, thieves, rapists, etc. This justice society had in its members soothsayers using Buenga composed of Bijimba (various substances).

The patriarch had the emblem. He knows that it is about a reincarnated passed by the cosmic tree, it is as alive as any being of the ethnic group. Only the great visionary initiates have the capacity to

## SONGWE - 7

dialogue with him. The omens which he foreshadows are always taken seriously because they generally take place over time. It is the obligatory passage between all the dialogues coming from the sacred wood to which men are always very attentive.

Height: cm.

## SONGWE-230

Region: Mulongo-Manono

Ethnicity: Songue-Beneki Kifwebe

History:

Khaka Muadi shield-panel: door of the snake hole in which the initiate, during his internship, must spend a night buried vertically without the possibility of moving, his feet sunk in about thirty centimeters in height of non-venomous snakes. This Gabo must also protect him from a night attack before entering, at sunrise, for the continuation of the Bukishi ceremonies.

Height: 55.5 cm.

## SONGWE-240

Region: Mulongo

Ethnicity: Songue-Beneki Kifwebe

History:

Kieuzi. Gabo of the four regions, also a door of protection against the nocturnal external spells of the future initiate. Cosmic vibrations are everywhere in the figuration of Kifwebe culture, sensitive to natural perceptions, a Van Allen belt felt instinctively long before modern space science. Terminal initiation stage.

Height: 53 cm.

SONGWE - 8

SONGWE-250-251-252

Memory of the Ibis of the Nile at the time when the black pharaohs ruled Nubia. Used during very important ceremonies intended to protect important displacements in dugout vessels, which can contain more than 150 paddlers armed to the teeth. Very related to the forces of liquid elements, rivers, lakes, swamps ...

SONGWE-261

Region: Kabinda

Ethnicity: Baami-Lembwe

History:

Left: reward spirit accompanying its owner throughout his life to bring him luck. Was sacred during the first passage of a rite of entry into a secret society.

In the centre: character generally hung on a N'Kizi (080 and 090)

Right: the square mouth (the house) also protects all those who live there. We ask him about everything that has to do with food.

Height: cm.

SONGWE-260-270

Village chief stool. The woman supports the entire vault on which the whole community lives and breathes within the limits of her living space.

Height: 42 cm

SONGWE-280-290

Region: Kongolo-Tshofa-Sentery

Ethnicity: Songue-Kifwebe

History:



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These faces were used as echoes of the voices of the spirits along the Lomami river during nocturnal ceremonies, at the very beginning of the dry season. Also fertility mask to promote births.

On the left the lunar, on the right Kilumi, the solar.

Height: 40 cm and 35 cm respectively

## SONGWE-300-310

Region: Kasongo

Ethnicity: Songue-Kusu

History:

Entrance pillar of a postmenopausal priestess. Blood, urine, excrement, beeswax, etc. The character protects women against all stomach problems.

Height: 81 cm.

## SONGWE-330-340

Region: Kabinda (South-West)

Ethnicity: Songue-Beneki

History:

The bikoko (drawing on the face) shows a character highly qualified to attend debates in a secret society (judgment of a criminal, a thief, a rapist, etc.). The overall reading here is very complex: hunter, warrior, soothsayer or blacksmith of the bukishi. Secret master of Strychnos used during ordales.

Height: 69 cm.

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SONGWE-370-380

Region: Kabinda

Ethnicity: Beneki

History:

The anamorphosis of the head is directed to the left, on the lunar side. This is particularly visible when the character is seen from the front. The horns (funnels) are obstructed and filled with protective material. The character is saturated to give him a formidable but very positive energy for the subject sending him a request. The horn in the ear is used to avoid shaking of the head. It cannot be presented in the light of day and remains huddled in a corner of the sacred hut and is used to support a request for all inhabitants of a village. If the brotherhood of wise men remarks negative events on his part, he will be ritually beheaded and burned.

Height: 77 cm.

SONGWE-390

BENA PAID

Region: KABALO

H: 29 cm

Protection against two-headed births. Among the many genetic anomalies, which can occur as in regions with too intense cobalt radiation (SHINKOLOBWE - KATANGA)

(negative tellurism for all animal life)

SONGWE-400

Region: Mulongo-Malemba N'Kulu

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## SONGWE - 11

Ethnicity: Songue-Beneki

History:

Commemorative but also protective character, placed in a corner of the house at the level of the sleeping mats always very close to the neck rests.

To be born with the envelope (the veil) on the head is a sign of reincarnation of a great character intended to be directed from the first stages of initiation towards the path of a blacksmith, a diviner but also of a great warrior hunter.

Height: 51 cm.

## SONGWE-410

Region: Kabalo

Ethnicity: Songue

History:

The one that Efile Mukulu has not yet recalled in the world above. This sage still has much to teach. The mouth revealing the exit of the forge bellows shows that its teaching is essential. Reading the position of the character and his personalized facial bikoko is understandable only by an insider in terminal phase. The strands of the beard on the chin are widespread among the Baluba Hembra.

Height: 36.5 cm.

## SONGWE-411

Region: Kongolo

Ethnicity: Wagongongwe

Sub-ethnic group:

History:

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## SONGWE - 12

Representation of hyper-androgyny.

The character is as much lunar as solar, bringing double power to the person born in this condition. It is possessed by spirits and therefore untouchable for the living. He can be declared "abnormal" by an opposing ethnic group and killed. That's why he hardly ever leaves his village.

Height: 52 cm.

## SONGWE-412

Region: Mulongo

Ethnicity: Songue-Luba

History:

Beneficial protective character of the family to whom everyone turns on their knees during a wish.  
Hidden in the roof of the hut.

Height: 42 cm.

return

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## SONGWE-420

Drum by the river. The WAZIMBA of Lega, antelope skin and Luba drawings, taken up by the song...

H: 33 cm

## SONGWE-440

## SONGWE BENEKI

## SONGWE - 13

Region: KABINDA

L: 42 cm

Extremely rare BWADI ceremonial pipe in Tugula root.

Only the ancients could touch it and carry it on the hip.

It was the reporter of what the ancients said, dialoguing with the trees of the sacred forest. Heard only by insiders.

The mouth in the quarter of the rising moon, by its smoke gave images that only the ancients could interpret.

## SONGWE-441-442

Region: Kabinda

Ethnicity: N'Kuba (very discreet sect)

History:

Thunderstorm. Catalyst to call for the onset of rain at the end of the dry season.

A native block of iron is inside the horn to summon lightning. Brandished at the top of a hill by a slave designated by the witch doctor.

Height: 88 cm.

## SONGWE-450

Royal emblem (papyrus leaf) ancient origin, prestige emblem of Nubian pharaoh.

Beneki accompanied by personalized belt masks.

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SONGWE-460

Region: Lusambo

Ethnicity: Bakwa N'Koto

History:

Knives (passports) of notables personalities worn on the belt, in a visible way.

Height:

Left = 31 cm.

Center = 35 cm.

Right = 31 cm.

SONGWE-461-470

Songwe-Luba

Ceremonial drum of things never finished. Symbol of the imperfection of the terrestrial world. The influences of nightlife are found on the foot. The buffalo leather handle, twisted, comes out of the eyes on the foot of a nocturnal entity. It is attached to the human face by entering through the ears.

Height: 40 cm.

SONGWE-480-490-491

H: 56 cm

SONGWE - 15

SONGWE-500

BENA PAID

Region: KABALO

H: 24 cm

Against leprosy, smallpox, measles, smallpox ...

SONGWE-510

H left: 56 cm

H right: 54 cm

SONGWE-530-540

KIEUZI

Region: MULONGO

H: 53 cm

Gabo of the four regions, also protective gate. Cosmic vibrations are everywhere. A VAN HAELEN belt felt instinctively long before modern space science. And through the indisputable quantum mathematics.

SONGWE-520

Luba-Songwé moon mask

28 cm, the crocodile uncle, the old man of the big snake ( the river).

30 cm, the fastest in the race, in combat until exhaustion.

## SONGWE - 16

25 cm, the guarantor of secrets forbidden to future initiates. The sign of the invisible. The superimposed gushing fountain which symbolizes the flow of knowledge that the one who wears this face possesses. Here the mouth of prohibited revelations.